

Conklin Reliable Market receives grant

By My-Ly Nguyen • mnguyen@gannett.com
December 16, 2010, 8:30 pm

CONKLIN -- Conklin Reliable Market is the first recipient of a grant from the New York Healthy Food & Healthy Communities Fund, Gov. David Paterson's office announced Thursday.

Owner John Gage said he plans to use the money to move and double the size of his store, expand its perishable-food department, modernize the facility and make energy-efficiency improvements.

The market is now located at 1109 Conklin Road. He wants to have the building torn down and move the store to the plaza he owns next door.

Gage said he doesn't know how much the grant will be. He estimates that his project will cost \$1.5 to \$2 million.

"They have not committed a number to us," Gage said, adding he also hasn't provided fund officials with concrete numbers on building costs.

The fund is paying for a feasibility study which will cost about \$7,800 and be finished in another two to three weeks, he said.

"We have to come up with the majority of the money through loans and private funding," Gage said about the overall project. "They're going to help us make the project feasible ... and help us bridge that gap."

Gage said he found out about the grant program through Associated Wholesalers. He's a member of the warehouse cooperative.

He expects to open the new market in spring 2012, with groundbreaking to occur in about a year.

Conklin Reliable Market has 17 employees, Gage said. He plans to add about 15 jobs at the new store ranging from department managers to hourly clerks.

The business is a second-generation, family-run market that serves a low- to moderate-income area in an area with few fresh food options, Paterson's office said. Gage took over Conklin Reliable Market from his father, who owned the store in its current

5,500-square-foot space since 1964. The new store is expected to be 11,000 square feet.

The Low Income Investment Fund, the lead fund administrator, is accepting applications for the \$30 million fund, which supports the development of healthy food markets in underserved communities. To download an application or for more information, go to liifund.org/healthyfood.

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